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ABSTRACT

Preservice teachers' attitudes toward the roles of women in society and their knowledge about women and the world of work were examined. Three groups each consisting of 30 undergraduate education students majoring in early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education were surveyed. Questionnaire responses were analyzed to determine: (1) How knowledgeable are today's preservice teachers about women and the world of work? (2) What are their attitudes toward women's roles in society? (3) Are there differences among education majors in knowledge and attitudes? and (4) What is the relationship between knowledge and attitude? The results indicated that the preservice teachers were moderately knowledgeable about women and the world of work and moderately accepting of nontraditional, sex-fair roles for women. There were no significant differences in responses based upon the students' chosen education major. There was a moderate positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes for each of the groups. Teacher educators should focus attention on assisting future teachers in becoming aware of sex role attitudes and the subsequent impact these attitudes have on students' achievement aspirations and career and life choices. (JD)

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PRESERVICE TEACHERS: KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDES ABOUT WOMEN

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Recent literature has called for a renewed interest in sex equity in education. Sadker, Sadker, & Hicks (1980b) declared that sex equity in teacher education programs must be a focus for this decade. It is well documented that sexist thinking is ingrained in our society and that the subtlties of of sex-role bias continue to dominate the educational scene. Research has indicated that male and female students continue to be educated differently due to three major factors: 1) bias in curriculum, materials, guidance, and testing; 2) differential teacher and counselor attitudes toward and treatment of males and females; and 3) differential student attitudes (Stacey, Bereaud, & Daniels, 1974; Safilios-Rothschild, 1979). These factors contribute to the continued acceptance of traditional sex-typed behaviors in career selection and life choices.

A decade ago, a book entitled Sexism in Schools and Society was written with the obvious intention that this material would stimulate educators to evaluate stereotypical attitudes and sex-biased behaviors that inhibit the development of male and female students toward their fullest potential (Frazier & Sadker, 1973). Today, despite the passage of Title IX, we find that relatively few changes designed to promote sex equity have been systematically incorporated into our educational system.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education standards urge teacher education programs to address

the issue of sex-equity, but very few programs appear to be doing so (Gollnick & Cyr, 1979). Most materials designed for teacher training in sex equity are designed for use with in-service teachers. However, materials have been recently published for use with pre-service teachers as the result of the Women's Educational Equity Act projects and the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project. Of the most frequently used texts in pre-service teacher education training, ninety-five percent (95%) of the texts devote less than one-percent of their content to issues of sex-equity and many of them actually perpetuate stereotypical attitudes and behaviors (Sadker, Sadker, & Hicks, 1980b). A noteable exception to this is Sadker & Sadker's (1981) new foundation of education text entitled Teachers Make the Difference. Today, women's studies courses are offered in many colleges and universities, although most of the courses are offered in liberal arts departments and few education majors enroll in them (Gollnick & Cyr, 1979). Few descriptions of courses, units, or modules regarding sex-equity taught in education departments can be found in the literature (Gillis, 1981).

When we examine the issue of sex equity in education and sex-fair teaching practices, we need to consider the impact of the women's movement upon society and of Title IX upon education. Have today's pre-service teachers been affected

by these factors? What are their attitudes toward women: stereotypical or sex-fair? Do these future teachers need to have their awareness levels heightened?

Research with public school teachers, counselors, and students has documented that exposure and instruction in non-biased techniques can produce changes in sexist thinking and can increase the use of strategies that are considered sex-fair/sex-affirmative (Griffin, 1982; Grandinetti, 1979; and Woodcock and Herman, 1978). A review of recent literature demonstrated that little research has been published relating to the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward women. Panko (1979) found that the attitudes toward women held by child development majors and education majors were not significantly different from the attitudes of students with other, non-education majors in the ten classes studied. Alden, Seiferth, and Jacko (1980) studied pre-service teachers' attitudes toward men and women. This research indicated that males were more sex-biased than females, and secondary education students were more sex-biased than elementary education students.

The current researchers examined a group of pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the roles of women in society and knowledge about women and the world of work. Four questions were analyzed: 1) How knowledgeable are today's pre-service teachers about women and the world of work? 2) What are the attitudes of today's pre-service teachers toward women's roles in society? 3) Are there differences among majors (i.e., early childhood, elementary, and secondary) in knowledge and attitudes?

and 4) Are knowledge and attitudes related?

Subjects

The population chosen for inclusion in this study consisted of ninety undergraduate students enrolled in upper division teacher education courses at Southwest Texas State University. Seventy-three females and seventeen males voluntarily participated in the study. Thirty respondents were randomly selected from each of the following areas: a) early childhood education b) elementary education and c) secondary education. The majority of students ranged in age from twenty-one years old to twenty-five years old.

Procedure

Students were asked to complete a survey instrument designed to measure attitudes toward the social, educational, and economic roles of women and to test the knowledge base of women and the world of work.

Knowledge about women in the contemporary world of work was measured by a questionnaire entitled Women and the World of Work (Riley-Griffin, 1979). This instrument contains fifteen true and false statements based on information from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau. The following statements are samples from this questionnaire:

"In predominately female occupations, women occupy the majority of supervisory positions."

"The largest group of working women in this country are single."

Respondents received a knowledge score from 0 to 15 based upon the number of correct responses.

Attitudes toward the roles of women were measured by the questionnaire entitled Attitudes Toward the Social, Educational, and Economic Roles of Women (Arnold, 1975). This instrument contains thirty-five statements reflecting traditional and non-traditional roles of women. The following are sample statements:

"Women are willing to give the necessary time to their work."

"Women seem to be inherently less capable than men of logical and scientific thinking."

"Women should be allowed to retain their maiden names after marriage if they so desire."

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item on a 5 point Likert scale. Possible scores ranged from 35 to 175 with the higher scores indicating more agreement with non-traditional roles. For the purposes of this study, score ranges indicated the following: a) 35 to 69 - strong agreement with statements based on traditional stereotypical roles of women and strong disagreement with non-traditional statements; b) 70 to 104 - moderate agreement with statements based on stereotypical roles and and moderate disagreement with non-traditional, sex-fair statements; c) 106 to 139 - moderate disagreement with stereotypical statements and moderate agreement with non-traditional, sex-fair statements and d) 140 to 175 - strong disagreement with stereotypical statements and strong agreement with non-traiditional, sex-fair statements.

Results and Conclusions

Pre-service teachers involved in this study obtained an average score of 9.86 or sixty-six percent (66%) on the knowledge section of the survey instrument, indicating some knowledge regarding women's roles in the world of work. Scores did range from a low of three (3) to a high of fifteen (15). One-way analysis of variance indicated no significant difference between early childhood, elementary, and secondary education majors on the knowledge scale (See Table 2).

Scores on the attitude section of the survey instrument indicated moderate disagreement with stereotypical statements and moderate agreement with non-traditional, sex-fair statements. The average score on this section was 134.56 with a range between 91 and 165. One-way analysis of variance revealed no significant difference between early childhood, elementary, and secondary education majors regarding attitudes toward the roles of women. (See Table 3) In a similiar study Sieferth, Alden & Jacko (1980) found differences between elementary and secondary pre-service teachers and between males and females. The current researchers did not examine male and female differences due to the relatively limited number of male participants in this study.

Additionally, possible significant correlations were examined between knowledge and attitudes of the respondents among the three groups. The results indicated a .30 for early childhood; .38 for elementary; and .37 for secondary education

pre-service teachers. These correlations are summarized in Table 1. There was a moderate positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes for each of the groups. The coefficient of determination (Table 1) also indicated that little of the variance in attitudes can be predicted by the level of knowledge.

The results of this study indicate that the pre-service teachers included in the sample population were moderately knowledgeable about women and the world of work and moderately accepting of non-traditional, sex-fair roles for women. This study also demonstrated that there was not a siginificant difference in responses based upon pre-service teachers' chosen education major.

Therefore, it can be determined that today's pre-service teachers are fairly aware of the work world and are beginning to accept non-traditional roles for women. The results of this study also indicate the importance of continued exposure of pre-service teachers to sex-equity issues.

Recommendations

Sex-equity should continue to be a major goal of the educational profession. Research has shown that teachers do make a difference. Therefore, teacher educators responsible for future generations of teachers, have a major responsibility in helping to meet this goal.

Teacher educators need to understand the effect of attitudes held by pre-service teachers on later classroom

behavior and interactions with students. Teachers' beliefs can promote a sex-fair learning environment or perpetuate traditional stereotypes that often limit student potential.

Teacher educators should focus attention on assisting future teachers in becoming aware of sex-role attitudes and the subsequent impact these attitudes have on students' achievement aspirations and career and life choices. Teacher educators need to teach pre-service teachers creative ways to eliminate bias and to produce a sex-fair learning environment designed to help students reach their fullest potential.

NCATE standards and requirements urge teacher education programs to focus attention on sex-equity issues with pre-service teachers. Recently, a few materials have been designed for use with pre-service teachers and teacher educators need to make a commitment to the task of training non-sexist teachers.

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TABLE 1

PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE

Group	Knowledge		Attitudes		r_{xy}	r^2_{xy}
	X	SD	X	SD		
Early Childhood	10.78	2.53	138.56	12.14	.30	.09
Elementary	9.47	2.69	134.30	16.60	.38	.14
Secondary	9.33	2.20	129.83	18.62	.37	.14

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR KNOWLEDGE

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	37.62	2	18.81	3.05 (NS)
Within groups	535.5	87	6.16	
TOTAL	573.12	89		

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR ATTITUDE

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	1144.3	2	572.15	2.23 (NS)
Within groups	22315.8	87	256.5	
TOTAL	23460.1	89		